

Disaster preparedness.

Survive and thrive. Because many disasters occur without warning, developing an emergency plan is essential. It should include a way for your family to contact each other, a meeting place should your home not be safe, and an action plan for someone injured or needing assistance.

You should also create a disaster kit. Store emergency supplies in a sturdy, easy-to-carry container such as a large backpack or duffel bag. Replace supplies such as water and food every six months. Keep a smaller version of the kit in your vehicle and another one at work, in case you become stranded or are not able to return home.



HOME DISASTER KIT

Water. One gallon per person per day for drinking and sanitation.

Food. Nonperishable, high-protein items including energy bars, ready-to-eat-soup and peanut butter. Select foods that require no refrigeration or cooking and little or no water.

Flashlight. Be sure to include extra batteries.

Radio. Hand crank or battery powered (with extra batteries).

First aid kit. Include bandages, sterile gloves, antibiotic ointment and first aid instructions.

Whistle. To signal for help in case you become buried in rubble.

Tools. A wrench to turn off gas (if necessary), manual can opener, screwdriver, hammer, pliers, pocket knife, scissors, keys to home and cars, garbage bags with ties (in case there are no usable toilets), and plastic sheeting and duct tape to protect against biochemicals.

Clothing and bedding. A change of clothes — including sturdy shoes and gloves, jacket or coat, long pants, long sleeved shirt, hat and gloves — and a sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person in your family.

Personal items. One-week supply of medications, eye-glasses and/or contact lenses and solution. Comfort items for children, such as plush animals and photographs.

Documents. Copies of important papers including ID cards, insurance policies, birth certificates and passports.

Sanitary supplies. Toilet paper, towelettes, feminine supplies, personal hygiene items and unscented liquid bleach.

Cell phone and chargers. Be sure to include a car charger, as this may be the only way to charge your phone if the power is out.

Money. Small denominations of cash. ATMs, gas pumps and credit cards won't work if the power is out.

Contact information. A list of current family phone numbers and email addresses. Include someone out of the area who may be easier to reach if local phone lines are out of service or overloaded.

Pet supplies. Food, water, leash, litter box or plastic bags, ID tags, medications and vaccination information.

Map. Consider marking an evacuation route from your neighborhood.